

TEACCH Autism Program Basics of Structured TEACCHing Training

Problem Solving in the Community – STEPHEN

Stephen is a 14 year-old adolescent with diagnoses of an autism spectrum disorder and mild intellectual disability. Stephen is highly distractible and generally has a relatively short attention span. He does show intense focus for certain narrow topics, however; his current area of interest is the set of Bakugan characters. Stephen is generally driven to research and learn all he can about his areas of interest. With respect to his current interest, his parents have described him as showing a “driven obsession” with making lists of all the characters during his free time. Stephen has difficulty with maintaining his hygiene, and his parents frequently use a choice of a community activity such as a library trip as a reinforcer for him to shower and use deodorant.

Stephen often requests to go to the library on the weekends. His parents report that, although this is favored activity for him, he demonstrates many behavioral challenges during his visits. For example, he has difficulty modulating his volume of speech and often talks too loudly. His favorite activity in the library is using the computers to search the internet but, once he is engaged on the internet, he has difficulty following the set time limits and allowing the next person a turn. When this happens, he becomes loud, screams, and gets angry at others for trying to remind him of computer policy. His parents often have to intervene and help him to calm down, which usually results in them leaving the library.

You are planning to take Stephen and his class to the local library. Please discuss with your group a plan for helping Stephen to be successful on this trip. Please design a system to help him more fully understand the library rules and improve his social-emotional and coping skills, along with a strategy to deal with his general inflexibility.